



Attention

Deer and Elk Heads Needed for CWD Surveillance

FREE CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE TESTING

This year the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) will be testing, free of charge, the first 600 deer and 50 elk heads submitted for sampling. Once the sampling goal has been met, hunters can still have their animal tested for a \$25 fee. The DFG began its Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Surveillance Program for free-ranging deer and elk in 1999. Since then, more than 2,000 samples have been collected and tested. All test results have been negative for CWD. California is considered a "low risk" state for CWD because of its long-term ban on the importation of live elk, prohibition of elk farming, and its strict monitoring of live deer importations.

California regulations ban the importation of whole deer/elk carcasses harvested out-of-state by California hunters. The regulation allows only the importation of antlers and meat that do not include the skull or backbone.

HOW CAN HUNTERS HELP?

Participate in CWD surveillance! Get your head checked!

The collection of heads or tissue samples will take place at staffed check stations that will be set up at convenient locations throughout the sampling area during opening weekend for different hunt zones. Hunter participation is voluntary and strongly encouraged. Collections may also occur at cooperating wild game processors in the northern California area. Priority will be given to samples collected from the following hunts within northern California, **Deer Zones:** A (Northern portion), C1, C2, C3, C4, X1, X2, X3a, X3b, X4, X5a, X5b, X6a, X6b, X7a, X7b, X8, X9a, X9b, X10 and X12 and **Elk Zones:** Big Lagoon, Del Norte, Klamath, Marble Mountains, Northeastern California, Siskiyou, Owens Valley, and Ft. Hunter Liggett.

Hunters are also asked to report any sick looking deer or elk to the Wildlife Investigations Lab through the contact information provided below. **To locate a check station within a hunt zone, check the DFG website after July 15, 2005 at:**
<http://www.dfg.ca.gov/hunting/deer/wasting.html>.

WHAT IS CWD?

CWD belongs to a family of diseases known as transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSEs). The disease damages portions of the brain of infected deer and elk, causing the animals to become emaciated, display abnormal behavior, and eventually die.

The most obvious and consistent symptom of CWD is chronic weight loss. Other symptoms include increased drinking and urination, excessive salivation, teeth grinding, and behavioral

changes, including listlessness, lowering of the head, blank facial expression, and repetitive walking. Duration of the illness varies from several days to a year; however, most affected animals succumb after a 3-4 month illness.

WHERE IS IT FOUND?

CWD was first observed in 1967 in captive deer at a research facility in Colorado. It is now found in wild deer and elk herds in limited areas of Colorado, Illinois, Nebraska, New Mexico, New York, South Dakota, Utah, Western Saskatchewan (Canada), Wisconsin, and Wyoming. It has been found in farmed elk or deer in nine states. To date, no confirmed cases of CWD have been identified in California.

IS CWD TRANSMITTABLE TO HUMANS?

Epidemiologists with the federal Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in Atlanta have found no link between CWD and any neurological disease that affects humans. However, based on recommendations from state agencies, it is suggested that hunters follow simple precautions when hunting:

- Wear rubber gloves when field dressing carcasses
- Bone out meat from the animal, minimize the handling of brain and spinal cord, eyes, spleen, and lymph nodes and avoid consuming these tissues
- Wash hands and instruments thoroughly after field dressing is completed
- Health officials advise that no human or animal eat any part of a deer known to have CWD or displaying clinical signs of CWD.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Hunters can learn more about CWD and view a map of the locations and the number of statewide samples previously tested, by visiting our website at:
<http://www.dfg.ca.gov/hunting/deer/wasting.html>.

Please send questions or comments regarding the CWD Surveillance Program to:

Wildlife Investigations Lab
1701 Nimbus Road, Suite D
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670
916-358-2790